

SECTION III—REMARKS

This amendment is submitted in response to the Office Action mailed June 17, 2004. Claims 15-20 are canceled and new claims 21-30 are added. Claims 1-14 and 21-30 remain pending in the application. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the application and allowance of all pending claims in view of the following remarks.

Allowed Claims

The Examiner allowed claims 1-14. None of these claims are amended herein, so they continue to be allowed.

Claim Objections

The Examiner objected to claims 16-18 for being dependent on a rejected base claim, but indicated that these claims would be allowable if re-written in independent form including all the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claim.

New claim 21 combines the limitations previously found in claim 16 and its base claim, independent claim 15. Applicant submits that new claim 21 is therefore allowable. As to new dependent claims 22-25, if an independent claim is allowable then any claim depending therefrom is also allowable. *See generally* MPEP § 2143.03; *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071 (Fed. Cir. 1988). Applicant submits that new claims 22-25 are therefore allowable by virtue of their dependence on allowable independent claim 21, as well as by virtue of the features recited in the claims. Applicant therefore respectfully requests allowance of the claims.

New claim 26 combines the limitations previously found in claim 18 and its base claim, independent claim 15. Applicant submits that new claim 26 is therefore allowable. As to new dependent claims 27-30, if an independent claim is allowable then any claim depending therefrom is also allowable. *See generally* MPEP § 2143.03; *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071 (Fed. Cir. 1988). Applicant submits that new claims 27-30 are therefore allowable by virtue of their dependence on allowable independent claim 26, as well as by virtue of the features recited in the claims. Applicant therefore respectfully requests allowance of the claims.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner rejected claims 15-20 under 35 U.S.C § 103(a) as obvious in view of, and therefore unpatentable over, various combinations of the following references: U.S. Patent No.

6,175,451 to Iriyama et al ("Iriyama"), U.S. Patent No. 5,229,593 to Cato ("Cato"), U.S. Patent No. 6,285,476 to Carlson et al ("Carlson"), and U.S. Patent No. 6,069,909 to Miller ("Miller"). Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner's rejections are rendered moot by the cancellation of these claims.

Conclusion

Given the above amendments and accompanying remarks, all claims pending in the application are in condition for allowance. If the undersigned attorney has overlooked a teaching in any of the cited references that is relevant to allowance of the claims, the Examiner is requested to specifically point out where such teaching may be found. Further, if there are any informalities or questions that can be addressed via telephone, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney at (206) 292-8600.

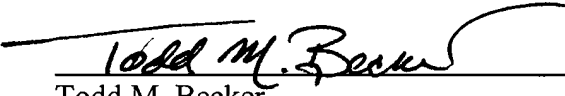
Charge Deposit Account

Please charge our Deposit Account No. 02-2666 for any additional fee(s) that may be due in this matter, and please credit the same deposit account for any overpayment.

Respectfully submitted,

BLAKELY, SOKOLOFF, TAYLOR & ZAFMAN LLP

Date: 9-17-04



Todd M. Becker
Attorney for Applicant(s)
Registration No. 43,487

Blakely, Sokoloff, Taylor & Zafman LLP
12400 Wilshire Boulevard, Seventh Floor
Los Angeles CA 90025-1030
Phone: 206-292-8600
Facsimile: 206-292-8606

Enclosures: Postcard
Amendment transmittal (in duplicate)
Check